

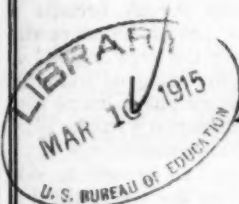
The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

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Resist Invasion

Whereas, One of the chief functions of education in a democratic society is to imbue the future citizens with a love of liberty, and to train them to defend their liberties; and

Whereas, Men and women who are themselves unable to exercise liberty cannot be entrusted with the training of the future citizens for real democracy,

Be it Resolved, That it is the sense of this meeting that any invasion of the teacher's freedom of thought or expression is a menace to the best interests of society, and should be resisted by all teachers and other public-spirited citizens.*

* Resolutions adopted at the Free Speech Meeting of the Teachers' League of New York, January 22, 1915.

THE LIMITS OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH*

HARRY ALLEN OVERSTREET

Professor of Philosophy, College of The City
of New York.

I SHOULD LIKE in the few minutes that are at my disposal to mark out if I can the limits of free speech. We are all theoretically in favor of free speech. In practise, however, when words spoken seem to endanger this or that in which we are vitally interested, when they slap us in the face, when they hurt our feelings and ruffle our pride, we begin to question whether the freedom which we theoretically allow should as a matter of fact be wholly without limits. I think that we may assume at once that there should be limits to free speech. The perplexing difficulty in practise is to discover precisely where those limits lie.

Each situation of course must be judged in terms of its own circumstances and conditions; and yet in order that there may be secure judgment upon all of them, there must be a grasp of the principle applicable to all.

When shall we declare that a person has publicly said something that he ought not to have said, something for which in all social justice he ought to be punished? Shall we condemn speech because the speaker's ideas are wrong? That indeed is the usual basis of condemnation. But nothing in all human history is clearer than the fact that there is no absolute or infallible test of the truth or falsity of ideas. The idea that to-day is declared false even by the majority of persons, may to-morrow assert itself as the greater truth. Our proper attitude toward ideas that we believe to be wrong should be not that of suppression—this has been the flagrant sin of all the world tyrannies—nor of punishment, but of generous endeavor to prove the error and convert the mistaken one to truer conceptions.

Shall we condemn speech because it hurts our pride, because it makes us ap-

pear ridiculous to our fellowmen. It is not impossible to believe that it may be salutary at times that our pride be hurt, that we be seen of men in a light not pleasing to our own self-esteem. Ridicule and sarcasm have been potent weapons in the service of truth and justice; and to punish speech because it hurts would be as foolish as to punish the mother who, for the greater good of her child, applies the sting of maternal chastisement. The mellow, more generous humor of a democracy has no place for the crime of *lèse-majesté*.

If we are serving in a system as subordinates to superiors are we justified in speaking freely our criticism of the conduct of our superiors? Obviously, in a system where obedience is the dominant principle, where the issuing of command and the unquestioning response are the spirit of the organization, criticism freely expressed is wholly out of place. We remember the horror evoked in military circles when Theodore Roosevelt sent his round robin on the subject of embalmed beef. In an army the subordinate is wholly a subordinate. His position gives him no privilege but to obey. If we are willing to be autocratic in organization, if we are willing to serve as parts of a military machine, we must be prepared in all justice to surrender the right to say our minds as we will.

But if we are democratic in organization; if, with all the detailed ordering of our several offices, subordinate and superior, we maintain our position as *persons*, not as obedient automata, the freedom to criticize even in public must remain as the inalienable right of our citizen participation.

The freedom to speak our mind must therefore not be denied us either because our mind is in error, or because the words that we speak bring pain, or because we are subordinate members of an organization, provided that organization be dem-

* An address delivered at a meeting of the Teachers' League of New York City, January 22, 1915, on "Freedom of Speech in Public Schools."

ocratic. When then may that freedom be denied us?

Suppose a man accosts a woman on the street. Shall this freedom of speech be permitted? Assuredly not. Suppose a man addresses a car full of people with obscene language. Shall this liberty to express himself be granted without limit? Again, assuredly not. Or suppose a man sends through the mails a letter that misleads, that brings disaster. Shall this be permitted? In all these cases there can be no question of the justice of limiting the spoken or the written word. Why? The answer is clear. Because in all these cases the motive is bad, the motive is anti-personal and anti-social. The man who abstracts money from your pocket by false pretense has not the interest of the public at heart. The man who addresses us with obscene language or who accosts a woman is not doing so in the service of humanity.

Here lies the determinative principle which we are seeking. Wherever the motive of speech is obviously anti-personal or anti-social, wherever in short the motive is that of hurting, there speech must be forbidden. Wherever on the contrary the motive is pro-personal or pro-social—for the welfare of the individual or for the welfare of society—there, even though it be in error, speech must be permitted.

The pro-social speech may indeed be made unwisely, in some regrettable heat of passion. It may be made in bad taste. Such blundering speech may be justly reprimanded; but it would go counter to all the profound principles of democratic freedom if it were punished as if it were a crime.

This leads me to speak of the case which has recently attracted so much public attention in our city. I refer to the severe punishment visited upon Miss Rodman by the Board of Education for a criticism of the Board printed in the public newspapers. I believe—and I understand that Miss Rodman has herself acknowledged this—that the form of that criticism was an error of judgment;

may I not say even that it was a blunder of taste. But anyone who knows of the splendid courage of Miss Rodman's fight for a cause knows that the criticism was made in a spirit wholly and consumingly pro-social. Some may not agree with Miss Rodman as to the value or the truth of the cause for which she was fighting; but no one I take it can for a moment doubt that, right or wrong, the spirit of her fight for that cause was the spirit of one who was striking out valiantly for the good of her human kind. I feel that the Board of Education should have been generous enough to have realized the splendid courage of this woman and to have passed over lightly what at best was but a hurt to its pride. In taking the action which it did take, on the contrary, the Board has apparently laid itself open to the criticism that the Board of Education will not suffer criticism.

We have advanced far in America; but there are many things that we have still to accomplish if we are to be the nation of free men and women that in our ideal contemplation we conceive ourselves to be. Above all we must rid ourselves in all walks of life of the last vestiges of that autocratic spirit which demands submission in the lower ranks for the mere sake of efficiency in the higher. Democratic administration must be filled with the spirit of democratic fearlessness, of democratic give and take. And particularly must this be true in the administration of our schools. Our schools, of all places, are the training ground of democracy. But if they who are to train our children for democracy are themselves denied the right of a fearless practise of the democratic spirit, what manner of poor democracy will that be that filters down into the lives of our children? "The light of the body is the eye;—but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" The light of the school is manly and womanly freedom. If that is denied, how hopeless is the gloom of its poor submissiveness!

FREEDOM OF SPEECH A PUBLIC SAFEGUARD*

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

Editor, THE FORERUNNER.

WE ALL KNOW the specific cause which has given rise to this meeting.

A teacher in our public schools has expressed her opinion through the medium of the press. This expression gave offense to the School Board by whom she has been penalized for this offense, in suspension without pay for the rest of the school year, amounting to a fine of \$1,800.

We have here an instance of the offended party acting as prosecutor, judge, and executioner—an arrangement quite incompatible with justice.

If this letter of Miss Rodman's constituted any real offense it must have been in the nature of libel; and the remedy lay in a suit for damages.

The School Board has power to penalize teachers under four distinct heads: Inefficiency, neglect of duty, insubordination, gross misconduct.

As the offense in question was quite outside the school limits it could not be treated under the first three heads, and was perforce, termed gross misconduct,

*Notes of an address delivered at the "Freedom of Speech" meeting of the Teachers' League of New York City, January 22, 1915.

a term evidently intended to imply immoral conduct.

The institution of free speech is for the protection of the rights of the individual and the promotion of intelligent discussion. It is particularly necessary in those institutions where any person or group of persons is given power over other persons, and at the same time set apart from public observation. In such institutions cases of oppression, injustice, petty tyranny, quite naturally appear, and the only safeguard is freedom of speech.

When an official in any way shows injustice to a subordinate, away from public knowledge, if the subordinate is not allowed to complain and protest, who will? The tyrannous official is not likely to take the public into his confidence. Our school system is archaic in its methods of discipline. The attitude of the Board toward the teachers is as if the latter were pupils, dependents, or employees, instead of being themselves fellow officials.

Such a position tends to develop petty abuses and sometimes grave injustice. We need in our schools a fuller democracy, a better illustration of the principles of freedom and justice.

UNDESIRABLE TEACHERS

THE ASSOCIATION of Women High School Teachers of New York City, organized mainly for the promotion of the social and moral welfare of the boys and girls in the high schools, has submitted the following request to the High School Committee and the Board of Superintendents:

It has been customary in the past to transfer to boys' schools men teachers who have been guilty of indiscreet or familiar conduct with their girl pupils. Altho we realize that such

transfer may remove the guilty teacher from temptation, it is our opinion, nevertheless, that the influence exerted by a man of low ideals and uncontrolled impulses is as undesirable in a boys' school as it is in a girls' school.

We, therefore, sincerely urge that teachers proved guilty of such conduct be dismissed from the service of our schools.

The association should be commended for taking this significant step toward cleaning up our own profession.

SELF-GOVERNMENT AND THE SCHOOLS

BENJAMIN MORRISON

WHEN FORTS are erected for the defense of a country the plans are laid by experts. In time of war, the soldiers are stationed in them, and told to defend them. They have no share in their planning, no way of knowing that they are called upon to defend a fort inherently weak because of the grafting of the builders who supplied cheap cement and steel, as is said to have been the case in the forts at Liege. The soldiers' business is to obey and defend.

And so it is with our school system. The courses of study are mapped out by experts. The teachers are required to teach the courses of study furnished them. The course may be inherently weak, only remotely connected with the child's environment and needs. The course may be lifeless and unnatural, but the teacher's business is to obey without questioning, and to teach that course. The teachers may be required to teach under conditions that are detrimental to themselves and to the children under their care—may be required to teach classes that are over-crowded, or teach in schools operated on the double session or triple session plans, or in schools where there are part time or "crazy time" classes—the teachers' duty again is to accept those conditions that are imposed upon them.

Or it may even be that a political body such as the Board of Estimate and Apportionment which is charged with no control over courses of study or the conditions under which teachers work, can, nevertheless, thru their control over the school appropriations, so arbitrarily cut the budget as to force the experts who know better to increase the number of teaching periods per day for the individual teacher, or the size of the already over-crowded classes. They may even force the exclusion from the curriculum of some new activity intended to supply a long felt need. Had the Board of Estimate of New York City been seized with the proper whim, they could, by withholding the appropriation for the

newly devised vocational education plan, have effectually prevented the initiation of this experiment.

It should be a fundamental assumption that the members of a profession, trade or craft should have the right and power to determine the conditions surrounding their creative or productive efforts.

The members of other professions determine the rules, regulations and standards that shall apply to their activities. These regulations are often changed to suit changing conditions, and in the case of medicine and law many of the regulations are embodied in statutes. Workers thru their unions have a decided share in settling the conditions under which they shall work, hours of labor, wages, sanitary conditions, etc.

Whether teachers be regarded as members of a profession or simply as more or less skilled workers, it still holds true that they also should have an important share in determining the conditions under which they work—such as the length of the school day and the school year, salaries and method of paying salaries, the use of corporal punishment, etc. Likewise the teachers should have a voice in mapping out the curriculum best fitted for the children, and how it should be taught. Like professional people or workers they should not be required to accept a set of conditions imposed upon them from above, and then to be rated on "their ability to understand and carry out orders." Whether these conditions be imposed by a group of educational experts, or by a board of education, or by a board of estimate, matters little. In any case the teachers, unlike industrial workers and professional men, neither determine the conditions of their calling nor have they even any representation in the body that does.

And why is this so? Is it because teachers are less capable of protecting their interests than carpenters and therefore need the protection of a school

board to help them, and incidentally decide for them what they shall do, and what they shall not do? Or is it because teachers are regarded as members of a sacred profession, who are to fill their minds and hearts only with the noble ideals of service, and should leave such minor considerations as *how* to be of best service to the children and *how* to train them for a place in a democracy to a board of experts and successful members of professions other than teaching? Naturally, material questions such as the length of the school year and salaries should not be allowed to conflict with the devotion to this ideal.

The question of self-government confronting the teaching profession is by no means new in civic life. To a lesser or greater extent, self-government has been the maelstrom of political upheavals for centuries and to-day the problem seems as new as ever. The people of this nation are recognizing more and more that their interests are not being served by their so-called "representatives," and as a result of this new view, we have the movement for the Initiative, Referendum and Recall. In seventeen States the people have the right to initiate any measure they desire to have enacted into law, or to have measures referred to them by the legislature for final approval; and in five States and many cities, they have the right to recall faithless officials from office. This idea is advancing so rapidly that even in Congress the proposition has been made that there be a national referendum on the question of armaments and in the declaration of an offensive war.

Admitting that there is no real analogy between the school and the political world, it is nevertheless true that the principle underlying this direct legislation movement can be applied at present to the solution of our problems, unless we feel that the school should continue to remain undefiled by the events of that living, throbbing world in which teachers and pupils have their being.

Several important problems of vital concern to all teachers are receiving the attention of the Board of Education and

the Superintendents of the New York City Department of Education—namely, the lengthening of the school year and the school day, the problem developed by the Board of Estimate's proposition that teachers work during the vacations without additional compensation, and the proposition that payment of teachers be made in ten installments instead of in twelve.

Were our schools democratically organized, these problems would be referred to the teaching body, discussed at teachers' conferences and voted upon by them—their vote being final. It is the teaching body that should decide these questions. It should not be a body of experts or of successful business men, nor even a Teachers' Council, which is far from being a truly representative body.

The principle of the Initiative should be extended to the teaching body. Changes that seem to a certain percentage of teachers necessary for the improvement of our working conditions should, by a definite process, be brot to the attention of all of us for our approval or disapproval. It is only by means of such a method that it is possible to develop the spirit of initiative which Professor McMurray found to be so woefully lacking in the teaching corps of New York City.

"Teachers are not capable of participating in the administration of the school or in determining the conditions under which we shall labor," we hear on all sides. It is well for us to remember that nothing can be developed by disuse. As Superintendent Maxwell so well says, "In order that pupils may have actual experience in governing themselves they should be given some opportunity for self-government by allowing them to manage or take an active part in managing the discipline of the school, the recitation, their own clubs, games, playgrounds, fire drills, opening exercises, entertainments, excursions, class and school libraries, athletic contests or class savings banks." What applies to the pupil applies equally well to the teacher.

Teachers cannot be fitted to share in the responsibility of school administration by scrupulously preventing their participation. Neither can we expect to develop initiative if isolated attempts are frowned upon.

Teachers must be trained for self-government and should be supplied with the opportunities for making use of this training. It is with pupils as it is with teachers, "mutual assistance and co-oper-

ative service are the fundamental principles of all healthy self-government."

A school system actually based upon this truism would require a complete revamping of our present method of school administration, which ranks "respect for lawful authority" as being of greater importance than the ability to interpret a little portion of the experience of the race to the children entrusted to our care.

SIDETALKS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS—VII

J S

DO YOU KNOW that we forward-going people waste a lot of valuable energy dragging you slow-moving, balky officials along? Oh, how you hang back, and set against the breeches! It is a waste of good wood to build a fire under you, but the thing has to be done, until the public learns more about horses and horse trading.

You may not know it yet, but this Free Speech campaign just beginning is a new fire, and it will be a hot one. We have built a good many fires now, and are developing a little skill. No one can blame us if we find the opportunity to have some fun in gathering the wood and piling it on, for the heat is bound to be transformed into motion overhead.

I attended the Freedom of Speech meeting of the Teachers' League in January. I wish you could have looked in upon us. You would have been impressed, I am sure—or stirred. The quality of impressiveness in the meeting developed from the linking up of the longing of teachers to live their professional lives honestly and frankly to the social demand for doing so as demonstrated by those speakers who had the necessary social vision to think the connection. Professor Overstreet, whose address I understand is to be published in the March number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, made the connection with telling clearness.

If you don't mind reading Professor Overstreet's address, you will find that he makes a valuable distinction between the free speech that is inspired by anti-social motives and the free speech inspired by pro-social motives. He believes that anything said from pro-social motives must be received, and not punished, no matter how much your pride or my pride may be hurt by the saying. Otherwise, the things that should be said for the protection of the welfare of the public, and for development of character in individuals, cannot be said at all. Furthermore, as Mrs Gilman pointed out in the same meeting, those engaged in a field of endeavor, as the teachers in the field of education, are the only ones on whom the public may rely for knowledge of the facts which the public ought to know.

I know that you will agree with all this, possibly with the reservation that free speech defeats its own end, which you believe to be good, when it is indulged in inopportunistically, or by irresponsible persons, or by persons who lack judgment, or by persons who are discourteous in the manner of their speaking. The number and bearing of restrictions similar to these cover so many of the situations under which freedom of speech might serve a valuable end that they practically eliminate the possibility of freedom altogether. The fact that any

of the restrictions are mentioned at all is proof enough that you and others who still hold the fortresses of educational power are unwilling to yield the last redoubt.

But why should you not realize, first, that in education there is no place for war, and second, that those who dare to speak their ideas boldly in the field of our common endeavor are neither insane nor as a rule actuated by selfish motives? No less a person than one of your own superior officers, a member of the board of education, once said to me that if he were told of serious conditions in the schools by a teacher, he would be inclined to believe the statements made to him, because, as he said, the teacher would be taking great risks in making damaging statements.

The member of the board was a successful business man, but his shrewdness in discerning the probable source of truth suggests to me the idea that all persons whose range of activity is likely to be

entered or touched by the finger of reform, should take a course of reading, supplemented by laboratory work, on the psychology of reform movements. If you are too busy now to consider the suggestion, I may be able to save you a great deal of worry and disappointment by telling you beforehand that one of the lessons of this course is that no amount of punishment for pro-social utterances or acts ever hinders in the least the ideas proclaimed. In fact, he who stands for the right is invincible, and it is a great pity that so many educational officers neither have the business man's shrewdness, nor the psychologist's understanding, nor the vision of Lowell in "The Present Crisis" when he wrote, "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

PLAN FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT IN A NEW YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

(This account is furnished by a school boy who believes in self-government.)

EACH CLASSROOM elects two officers to represent it on the Self Government Committee. These officers report offenders at the meetings held each week, the offender having been summoned to the meeting by the reporting officer. If he fails to appear, it is put down against him or her as a second offense. For the first offense the offender is merely warned. For the second he is referred to the enrolling room teacher, who deals with him as he or she deems necessary. For the third offense he is reported to the principal, and his name is put down on the black-list. After that he is publicly disgraced before the school at assembly period.

[Let us not overlook the resources of

democracy itself in our quest for tyranny.—Ed.]

One of the distinctions between a profession and a business is that the former emphasizes service, whereas the latter emphasizes profit. This distinction comes to be arbitrary when lawyers and doctors and architects and preachers are driven by economic pressure—or by any other demoralizing factor—to sacrifice principle to expediency; and when merchants and machinists and manufacturers are lifted by an awakened social consciousness to the level of devoted servants of the common good. But in general this is a valid distinction, and a legitimate one. For in general the professional workers have been recruited with a view to doing work in which they were interested; and in general men and women have gone into business or into trades because one must perforce "make a living"—or more. With this distinction in mind, the status of the teacher may be judged by the doings of teachers.

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This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

PUERILE PERVERSITY

IT MUST BE the war that makes so many people of common sense act so unreasonably; at least we cannot imagine what else it may be. A private in one of the camps (it does not matter what the nationality was, and we insist upon remaining neutral) while waiting for his regiment to receive instructions to mobilize into the fighting area, received word from home telling him that his mother

was dying. He applied to his captain with a request that he be allowed to go home for a few days. The captain refused to take any action, and the mother died without seeing her son. Later the matter came to the attention of the colonel, and he called the captain's attention to the fact that the private was within his rights in making the request for a leave, and that the captain had no right to take it upon himself to decide whether the soldier was to go home or not. Thereupon the captain insisted upon making amends by having the private sent home for ten days. "But I do not wish to go home now; my mother is dead, and I would rather go to the front," protested the stupid private. "But your application for leave is *now* granted and you *must* go," maintained the captain; and being in authority over the private, the enforced leave was taken.

In this country a woman at work asked leave of the fellow-employees in authority over her branch of the service, to stay away from work for a few months, as she expected to give birth to a child. The leave was refused; the woman stayed at home without permission and the child was born. In her absence, the woman was dismissed from the service for "neglect of duty." A higher authority ordered her reinstatement when she was prepared to resume her work. Then the wise captains forthwith granted her original application for leave of absence and insisted that she had to stay away from work—and lose her pay. "But I am all done with that child-bearing affair," she protested; "I am prepared to resume my work." "Oh, that does not matter," said the managers, "you wanted a leave of absence in December; we erred in not giving it to you then, but we shall make it up to you. You shall now stay away for fifteen months more; we will give you leave of absence good and plenty."

Moreover, the managers proceeded to formulate new regulations to prevent similar errors in the future. They decreed that in the future every worker should be given leave of absence for

three months preceding the death of either parent, and for six months after the date of the funeral. This was for the purpose of preventing the worry and annoyance incident to such affairs from interfering with the efficiency of the service. And for births they adopted a still more liberal rule: For six months preceding the birth of a child, the worker is to remain away from work, and for eighteen months after the birth of the child. No provision is made for maintenance of mother or child during these two years, nor are the rights of fathers to peace and rest during the trying times recognized in any way. Neither did the managers take into consideration the fact that some mothers are ready to go to work a few weeks after child-birth, while others require many, many months.

Those captains acted very childishly in allowing their chagrin at being over-ruled by higher authority to warp their judgment so perversely. Or is it simply an indication that some people think only in terms of words and rules and formulas, and never are able to understand real situations? In any case, the schools throw themselves open to serious criticism in permitting people with such minds to get past them into positions of responsibility.

THE INSOLENT OF PATRONAGE

THRU A FORTUITOUS concourse of circumstances, for which no person or class may be held responsible, we are at present in a state of economic depression and disorganization that entails unspeakable misery and suffering upon hundreds of thousands of people in this country. For reasons that are not altogether clear, those who have arrogated to themselves the emoluments and the responsibility of managing the affairs of the world have failed to manage these affairs with entire satisfaction—at least to the managed. There is excessive unemployment, there is employment with underpayment, there is employment with overwork and exploitation—when times are “good.” At

present we have these monstrosities of economic life in unusual amount. And we instinctively turn to the managers and masters for relief, the same managers and masters who have assured us in the past that their high rewards are earned by their high service in managing our affairs.

In the City of New York a committee appointed by the mayor has collected funds and established agencies for dealing with the acute unemployment. Among other agencies at work is a special school for unemployed female stenographers and clerical workers. An unoccupied floor in a loft building was equipped with tables and chairs, one of the typewriter companies loaned a number of machines, manufacturers of other office equipment helped with the loan of their respective specialties, the Board of Education assigned a number of teachers, and the unemployed girls are given an opportunity to improve their efficiency by attending this school for six hours a day, while one of the relief committees pays over seventy-five cents a day for each girl. When one of the girls finds a job, she is immediately replaced by another, and the group is maintained at full register. In this way the time of waiting for “business to improve” is put to good use.

Now comes a party of newspaper reporters, with cameras and peering eyes, personally conducted by a couple of millionaires, and accompanied by a number of very nice ladies and gentlemen. They invade this loft, which is ostensibly a school, and without as much as “If you please,” the patrons proceed to direct the rearrangement of the girls, that they may show to the visiting ladies and gentlemen how nice they look at their tables, and that they may make a pretty picture for the cameras. They walk about among the girls in a very friendly way and ask impertinent questions most politely. They feel that they are sacrificing their valuable time in a worthy cause, and depart with the consciousness of duty well performed. The newspapers describe

the proceedings in a tone that suggests admiration for the nice ladies and gentlemen who are doing so much to relieve the distress of the unemployed, and the girls are expected to "appreciate" what the nice ladies and gentlemen are doing for them.

But there is no one to resent the whole proceeding as a piece of shameful insolence. So long have we been accustomed to look upon the managers as our patrons, that we are expected to be grateful for an opportunity to eat out of their hands. Should a party of sociological students break into a school for the sons and daughters of our elect, and proceed to ask the children about their domestic arrangements and the frequency of their baths, something violent would happen. But when wealthy people break into a public school with their patronizing impertinence, this is considered an evidence of kind intent. Nor would these same people invade an ordinary public school in this manner; they would have the decency to consult the principal and go by his leave. In the present case it was a school of "unemployed" driven to accepting relief; it seems that such people may be treated as interesting subjects, and need not be considered as persons.

But so long as we are content to conduct our civilization on the patron and beneficiary basis, we have no cause to complain.

BEARING DOWN

FOR FORTY YEARS we have been "democratizing" the high school in this country. We call it democratizing because that is a nice word and at present quite fashionable. But in reality we have only been vulgarizing the high school. That is to say, we have been extending its advantages to more and more children, and in such wise that they turned out to be disadvantages. Suddenly we are awakening to the fact that this vulgarization is of benefit neither to the pupils nor to the state; and a part of the current unrest in educational circles is due to a searching for remedies for the re-

sult of the ill-considered expansion of "higher" education.

There are several ways of meeting the situation. One approach to the solution is along the line of adapting the high schools to the actual needs of adolescents, and to the prospective needs of the men and women that these adolescents are presumably to become. But in the State of Connecticut, which in former years had a wide reputation for ingenuity and inventiveness, a radically different solution is proposed. The argument runs something like this:

"Our boys and girls are not getting full benefit from attendance at high schools. Let us therefore keep them out of the high schools."

In pursuance of this philosophy, there is now pending before the General Assembly of that State a bill providing for annual fees for attendance upon public high schools. These fees are graded. The children of those who own a certain amount of real or personal property—"taxpayers" in other words—are to pay thirty dollars a year. Children of ordinary folks who do not own enough property to be considered taxpayers are to pay forty dollars a year. This is a refreshing improvement upon the pauperizing policies of other states and other times. It is in strict harmony with the literal acceptance of the new testament aphorism, "To them that have shall be given, etc." It is a masterpiece of educational statesmanship that will appeal to the taxpayers and to the superior classes generally.

But from the point of view of those children who have failed to provide themselves with opulent parents, or parents endowed with a large capacity for acquisition, the proposed legislation is nothing less than a bill of exile. The adoption and enforcement of such a law will result in restricting the schooling of the masses of children in the State to what may be accomplished in the first six grades; and that means leaving the masses in outer darkness.

There was once a superstition abroad

in the world to the effect that the classes are the elect of God, and that the masses were nothing but clods. We had supposed that the institutions of this country were founded on a repudiation of this superstition. It seems now to be the purpose of the masters of Connecticut to reestablish the ancient regime. The activities of the state commission will bear watching.

LEADERSHIP

ONE OF THE bases for judging the quality of understanding of educational ideals in a body of teachers is the character of the leadership with which they appear to be content. And conversely, one may predict that a certain type of leader, namely, a dishonest, an unintelligent and hysterical one, will prevail among teachers who do not think, and would not be allowed to think if they could. In either case, the children are the goats.

A PROPHECY

BEFORE the public school superintendents meet in Cincinnati we predict three things. First: A number of speakers will indulge in eloquent eulogies of our public school systems, decrying criticism and consigning critics to the unsavory companionship of all heretics. Second: Another group will stand forth as diplomats, pointing out the good things in our schools, admitting some of the criticism, and trying to bring those at variance into amicable coöperation. Third: The critics will challenge their colleagues, in tones friendly or hostile according to individual temperaments, to face the changed industrial and social conditions that call for a restatement of educational aims. The first group will receive the most applause; the second will gain the most immediate success for its proposals; the third may become known to posterity as among the moulders of public education.—*The New Republic*, February 13, 1915.

A REPRESENTATIVE BOARD OF EDUCATION

What is a representative board of education?

Is it one that has a member from each ward or election district?

Or is it one that has a member from each of the political parties?

Or is it one that has a member from each religious denomination?

Or is it one that has a member from each of the nine thousand different occupations followed by the citizens?

Or is it one made up of men and women who think the best and feel the broadest sympathies and advance the loftiest ideals that the citizens are capable of developing?

Is the board of education to represent the conflicting interests in the community, or the common interests of the community?

Is it to represent the saloonkeepers and real estate dealers and the dead hand of the past, or is it to represent the children and the hopes of tomorrow?

CO-OPERATION

TEACHERS should coöperate. The school should be like one big family, each anxious about the welfare of each one connected with it. No school can work to the best advantage unless there is coöperation. Pupils are very quick to take notice of the lack of coöperation, and the result is loss of faith. There will be coöperation if all teachers have the welfare of their pupils at heart and a teacher that has not is as bad as, if not worse than, a poor doctor.—FRANCES E WESSON, in *American Education*, January, 1915.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER is under deep obligations to Mrs. A. V. de Mers, secretary of the Teachers' League of New York City, for making the stenographic notes of the addresses of Mrs. Gilman and Professor Overstreet, printed in this number.

ON THE SIZE AND THE QUALITY OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

THE PRODUCTION of an efficient and enlightened board of education is no child's task, and we should not indulge in the short-sighted thinking of children in the process of developing the ideals and the constitution of so important a body. Children are almost sure to forget that what they wanted yesterday may be inconsistent with what they want today. Moreover, the reason given for what they want may cover a mine of insincerity and deception. That statement will apply equally well to newspapers that exploit the personnel and the problems of a gigantic educational system for profit, and to politicians and other persons whose tastes for activity and "influence" lead them into positions where they may control the public's most important social business.

In the discussion of the question of whether New York City shall continue to have a large board of education, or shall have a small one instead, there is a great deal of the short-sighted thinking of children. The supporters of the large board say that a small board would open the way for the political control of education. By all means we must keep politics out of the school system. Those who are trying to introduce the methods of the politician into the schools may as well give up their fight, for no less a person than Senator "Christy" Sullivan has said privately that he will oppose all such efforts when the bill for the proposed reduction of the New York City Board of Education comes up for consideration at Albany. When Christy and his friends in the Legislature and in the Board of Education say they do not want politics in the school, we have only ourselves to blame if we believe them.

* * *

AND WHO is it that is accused of wanting to inject politics into the school system? It is the Board of Estimate of the City of New York. But without ques-

tion the present Board of Estimate of New York is the most enlightened and the most public spirited group of men, that, at least within the knowledge of men now living, have ever managed the affairs of the great city. The Chairman of the Board, the Mayor of the City, appoints the members of the Board of Education, and could if he desired control a large board just as easily as it is supposed he would control a small board. Yet the first eight appointees of Mayor Mitchel were selected absolutely without reference to their political affiliations, and solely on the basis of their fitness for the high position of public trust. Indeed, the selection of these eight men and women has established a higher standard of qualification for membership in the Board than has ever prevailed before. What the standard of qualification was before Mayor Mitchel's time, it would be impossible to say.

* * *

ONE OF THE dangers supposed to be characteristic of a small board is the star chamber method of doing business. The proposed number for the small board is nine. By an ominous coincidence, and one that must have been overlooked by those who play like children at reasoning, is the fact that four of the most powerful committees of the present Board of forty-six are composed of nine members each. Most of the remaining committees have seven members. It is generally known that the real work is done by the committees, and that the Board must approve or disapprove the recommendations of its committees, with very little time for thorough consideration of the issues involved. In fact, there is a strong tradition that the findings of the committees in their several fields must be upheld.

While the Board of Education itself holds its conferences open to the public, except in rare instances, the committees hold their conferences in private; and

rarely does anyone mention the possibility of star chamber methods in that quarter. But the possibility is there, and probably the actuality as well.

* * *

ANOTHER REASON against a small board of education is that the business to be done by a board in a large city is appalling, and a large board is absolutely necessary. Now, you may be aware of the fact that the supporters of the idea of a small board in a large city have never maintained that a board of education should do all the minor work, such as ordering the transfer of two dozen chairs from P. S. 13 to P. S. 23, but rather that the proper work of a board of education is the development of lines of general policy, and the designation of departments to carry out the policies with entire supervision over details. You know also as a matter of fact that forty-six persons may engage in oratory for their own entertainment and to their own entire satisfaction. You know that forty-six persons cannot collectively clinch on a fundamental issue, and thrash out their differences in man to man combat, and come to a decision after all points of view have been presented and maintained. Large and efficient bodies always find it economical of time to have general policies formulated by small committees in which the members can get at one another. But if you are a special pleader interested in keeping things as they are, when you go up to Albany to fight the "small board" bill, you will never let on to the gentleman from Niagara that you know.

* * *

THERE ARE so few persons who are not special pleaders that it would never do to assign to these few the honest thinking that the circumstances demand; the others would not trust them, aside from the practical difficulty that there would be no one to make the assignment. But at least the few should take the trouble to expose the ill-concealed special pleading of many who favor the continuation of the large board, as well as the more carefully concealed desire

of some supporters of the small board who seem to favor it as a means of getting rid of undesirable citizens on the large board.

As we have intimated, there are practical administrative advantages in having a small board, the most important of which is the radical simplification of the program of business to one of developing policies. An efficient board would never undertake to do everything, after the fashion of the present Board in New York, and find itself continually running the gauntlet of public criticism for not understanding anything satisfactorily.

But if we want to be honest and frank just for the sake of the public welfare, we should hasten to admit that even a small board cannot be efficient in developing general policies for educating a cityful of cosmopolitan children, if the board is made up of lawyers of the highest standing, or of successful business men, or even of eminent citizens. Right there is the place for our best contributions of that. We must develop and set off, for the collective criticism of all, our ideals of the qualifications for membership in a board of education. The sooner we begin the better. When we get our ideals shaped, we shall probably not let the matter of a paid board or a non-paid board disturb us. When we know what we want, we can have it; when we have it, we must pay for it, or we cannot keep it.

A member of a board of education should have more to draw on for inspiration than a good education. We might even excuse him from the education, such as it might be, if he could show a thoro understanding of what education is all about, its significance to the race, its place in civilization, its social value, its relation to the full development and the success of the individual.

A member laying claim to fitness should understand the economic and social needs of all classes of people, or be enough of a student to find them out, and be willing to enter into a plan for realizing for all their just human de-

mands as far as education could meet them.

A member of a board should have what is commonly called enlightenment, and should be in touch with the spirit of progress, and be able to personify it in his own leadership in those social ideals which his insight enable him to discern as indicative of the best development of his time.

* * *

AT THE RISK of being accused of special pleading ourselves, we nevertheless submit for the critical examination of the public the proposition that persons engaged in the practical business of education are more likely to embody the qualifications suggested in the preceding paragraphs than are those who are primarily interested in other matters. If teaching children and administering schools is unfavorable to the development of a leadership that would be able to act responsibly and intelligently in the interest of the public, then let us join with you in finding out what is the matter. For your children and your children's children may suffer untold and unknown deprivations at the hands of a profession of incompetents, and there are few to tell you what to do about it.

THE TEACHER'S BOARDING PLACE

A county superintendent at a conference in one of the Southern states reported during the past summer that the only place open as a boarding place for one of his teachers was in a home where the husband was living with his second wife and the wife with her second husband. In this home were five children from the father's first marriage, six from the mother's first marriage, and five from their second marriage. There were more children in this home than the teacher had in her school, and while the parents were generally in harmony, there was no general agreement among the three sets of children. The teacher was forced to resort to the schoolhouse for privacy in her studies.—*From a Circular by the U S Bureau of Education*

BOOK NOTES

One of the failures of modern education is that the system has become so bureaucratic that the teacher is a pawn to rule and schedule. His individuality is smothered. He teaches according to inflexible schemes and diagrams drawn up in a far away office. Thus the masters are converted into machines, and pupils go forth into the world trade-marked, not soul-marked.

In his *Teacher and Teaching*, Richard H. Tierney, S.J., shows that the primary end of teaching is formation of character, and this, he says, can be effectively done only by bringing the student to realize the high purpose of life, by giving him a desire to play a noble part in the world. Life, not books, should be a boy's study. He must learn lessons of high thot, lofty aspiration, candor, reverence, purity, unselfishness, accuracy. No teacher held fast by a hide-bound system can accomplish the task thus laid out for him; but merely being free is not sufficient to make the ideal teacher. The man is the educator. The more a noble personality enters into the work, the better and more lasting will its effects be. The teacher himself must be a man of character. The man of low estate cannot impart high lessons to others. The real teacher must be a lover of wisdom, a seeker after knowledge, a man great of soul as well as great of mind; he must be the friend of truth, justice, courage, and temperance,—in a word, godly. He will go to his work with hope and courage, the Providence of God his mantle, the belief in the divine possibilities of every human soul, his staff. (Longmans, Green & Co., \$1.)

IN HER USUAL incisive manner Ellen Key analyzes some of the social problems of today and tomorrow from the point of view of the training of children in *The Younger Generation*, which is translated from the Swedish by Arthur G Chater. The chapters are made up of papers written on various occasions, and have no conection except the common purpose of search for the place of the child in society and the rights and needs of the child as they bear on present day policy. (G P Putnam's Sons. \$1.50 net.)

Comments, favorable and adverse, on the Freedom of Speech meeting, addressed to the President of The Teachers' League

"Congratulations on last Friday's meeting! I am glad the speeches are to be printed. Professor Overstreet's clear analysis of the limits of free speech will be helpful to me in student self-government work. I have never before heard the issue put so clearly and convincingly."

"The meeting Friday evening was glorious! It was as dramatic as a play, with a rising action and a climax that were thrilling. It was the most inspiring meeting of teachers that I have ever attended."

"I wish to congratulate you upon what to my mind was one of the most inspiring meetings I have ever attended. I hope much good will come of it."

"That was a crack-a-jack meeting we held at the High School of Commerce. How about the fund for Henrietta? Why not have a few more uproaring meetings?"

"I was surprised to find how generally the teachers regarded the matter from a personal standpoint, and how little appreciation they appeared to have of the loyalty towards those in authority which is so vitally important in any organization."

"Dear Sir: If I were in the Board of Education, I would have you fired from your job so quick it would make your head swim. Things have come to a pretty pass when the scrubs or employees can hold meetings to criticize their employers. Look out and be careful is the advice of a friend."

"JOHN JONES, The Buttonmaker."

"The latest action of the League in offering to reimburse Miss Rodman for salary lost is an open insult to the Board of Education. She deserved all she got." ["What she got" was a suspension for eight months, a loss of \$1,800, for writing a satirical letter to the *New York Tribune* criticizing the Board of Education for its policy of dismissing mother-teachers from the school system. The State Commissioner of Education has overruled the Board of Education, and has ordered the reinstatement of a mother-teacher who was dismissed for "neglect of duty" incident to bearing a child.]

A VALUABLE PAMPHLET

THE JOINT COMMITTEE on Health Problems in Education of the National Council of the National Education Association and of the American Medical Association, in coöperation with the United States Bureau of Education, prepared in very brief form a list of *Minimum sanitary requirements for rural schools*, copies of which ought to be put into the hands of every teacher and every member of all county, township and district boards of education. Ten copies of this have been sent to each county and township superintendent in the United States. Copies may be had gratis upon application to the Bureau of Education.

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

NO DEMOCRACY can long live and thrive whose children are fed continually on the ideals that tend to produce class distinctions and autocratic rule. An essential of true democracy is individual freedom. . . . This desire for larger freedom is one of the strongest instincts of the human soul. It begins with youth and continues through life. It is the principal cause of the social unrest and when rightly nourished furnishes the best and truest products of civilization. Education should not thwart it, but stimulate it and use it to the highest ends of citizenship.—G W A LUCKEY, in *School and Society*, 16 January, 1915.